

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHMN #1179/01 3471145
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 131145Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6628
INFO RUCNMER/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0469
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ DEC LIMA 4870
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1913
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2951
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 001179

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/BSC AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2016
TAGS: [PROP](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KPAO](#) [UY](#)
SUBJECT: LEFT USING HUMAN RIGHTS TO DISCREDIT US

REF: MONTEVIDEO 1103 (NOTAL)

1. (SBU) Summary: Uruguay's leftist groups increasingly resort to human rights as an anti-U.S. rallying cry. Uruguayan press coverage of Augusto Pinochet's death on Human Rights day serves to reinforce the local assertion that leftists are the only "true" defenders of human rights. Recently declassified U.S. documents from the period around the Uruguayan dictatorship have fueled the fire, and they will be prominently featured in the prosecution of two senior Uruguayan officials accused of conspiring to murder four people in 1976. Venezuela's Telesur continues to broadcast accusations that the U.S. sponsored "Plan Condor," while it flashes snippets of declassified documents on its cable broadcasts as "proof." The anti-U.S. propaganda machine is rumbling more loudly, and the time for some sort of response may be approaching. End Summary.

PRESS REACTION TO PINOCHET'S DEATH

2. (SBU) Uruguayan press coverage of Augusto Pinochet's death on December 10 reinforces the local assertion that leftists are the only "true" defenders of human rights. Papers exude a great deal of nostalgia for the presidency of Salvador Allende and a vilification of those who mourn Pinochet's passing. Socialist and Communist legislators demonize him as the inspiration for other dictatorships in the region, including in Uruguay, and papers convey a sense of joy in his death. Most reports imply a vindication of leftist ideology at the death of the man many consider to be the movement's greatest enemy. Chile's economic success or the very real threat posed by international Communism during the Cold War are seldom, if ever, mentioned.

HIGH PROFILE TRIAL BEGINS

3. (SBU) U.S. declassified documents from the period around the Uruguay dictatorship have fueled leftist allegations that the U.S. is an enemy of human rights. Prosecutors are using declassified U.S. documents to bolster their case against Former Uruguayan President Juan Bordaberry and Former ForMin Juan Blanco. The two men served during the early dictatorship and are charged with conspiracy to murder two opposition congressmen and two Tupamaros in Argentina (reftel). While the U.S. documents we have seen do not explicitly link the U.S. to any regional conspiracy against opposition leftists, the case brings new attention to the aging issue. Commentators sloppily and regularly presume U.S. complicity in Plan Condor's campaign of crushing guerrilla movements in the 1970s and endorsement of brutal methods.

¶4. (SBU) In the current trial, one an important witness for the prosecution is Martin Almeda, a Paraguayan lawyer who reportedly discovered "the Terror Archives" of strongman Alfredo Stroessner's 1954-89 dictatorship. The other is Carlos Osorio, an Information Systems Manager at "The National Security Archive," an independent non-governmental research institute and library at George Washington University. The media refers to Osorio as "one of the most important declassifiers of the State Department's private documents."

TELESUR HERE

¶5. (SBU) Meanwhile, Venezuela's Telesur has been running a steady stream of high-quality, anti-American propaganda pieces. The "Injerencia" series about CIA "meddling" in Latin America is a particularly slick product that incorporates documentary segments, present day interviews with witnesses and liberal use of selected declassified FOIA documents. We note that Uruguay has a ten percent stake in Telesur (which it pays by donating content) and that the local government-owned channel has increased its broadcasting of conspiratorial, anti-U.S. propaganda in recent weeks.

COMMENT:

¶6. (C) The legacy of human rights abuses committed during the 1973-84 dictatorship is not a new theme in Uruguay. In the immediate post-dictatorship period, many writers and editors accused the U.S. of sponsoring Plan Condor and of complicity in the dictatorship's abuses. What is new is that the Frente Amplio is now in power and has the political and media resources to make the old charges more uncomfortable for the U.S. The dredging up of the past appears to be morphing into something more than mere "closure" or a politically convenient public distraction. The barrage of sophisticated propaganda links the U.S. to the past abuses and paints it as the intellectual author of Plan Condor. We do not believe that President Vazquez sanctions this development; we also doubt that he will do anything to dissuade it.

¶7. (C) Comment continued: Meanwhile, the U.S. appears to have abandoned the field on this discussion and has said that the declassified documents speak for themselves. Scandals at U.S. anti-terror detention facilities have not helped to promote engagement either. Nevertheless, there may come a time when we might need to defend ourselves against this assault on U.S. credibility and intentions. We are not at that point yet, but the trials of Bordaberry and Blanco may make it necessary to respond. After all, our core interests in the region (fostering economic growth, stability and democracy and fighting narcotics) greatly depend on our reputation. End Comment.
Baxter